

## President's Report for September 9, 2013

The primary activities for the month were to attend the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (916 651 5405) Reception held on Wednesday August 28 at SONY Pictures in Culver City, and to work on a set of priorities for the Commission, following input from the Retreat. In addition to attendance by Geena Davis and Assemblywoman Holly Robinson, several Commission leaders from Glendale, City of Los Angeles, and Pasadena attended and re-affirmed commitment to developing a shared agenda for the women and girls of Los Angeles County. A joint meeting is planned for late September at Mt. St. Mary's where a database for the state Commission will be housed. Rebecca Blanton (REBECCA.BLANTON@WOMEN.CA.GOV) was on hand to describe the need for documentation of the impact of the various Commissions throughout the state, and that the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is the only one to be asked to become self-sustaining. Essentially, there is a one-year timeline to come up with a plan, or to convince legislators to identify a source of funding for the Commission. It was suggested that each Commission contact her /his (yes, there are *male* Commissioners) appointing supervisor to generate local support, and forward that to Governor Brown and key representatives.

Hard copies of several reports were distributed; *California Women and Employment: An Overview*, *California's Women Veterans at a Glance*, *California Women and Education: An Overview*, *Professional licensing and Military Spouses*, *California's Women Veterans and Military Sexual Trauma (MST)*, *California's Women Veterans Benefit utilization*, *California's Women Veterans and Mental Health*, and *California's Women Veterans and Homelessness*. These are available through the California Research Bureau [www.library.ca.gov/crb](http://www.library.ca.gov/crb). Please share the link and the specific titles with relevant groups in your community, and with your supervisors.

Based on our discussion at the August Retreat it seems imperative to focus our priorities for this year. Much of our discussion during the retreat emphasized "process", which is critical to shared governance. In short, this year's activities need to have impact and coordinate with or at least complement the activities of State and sister Commissions throughout LA County. Clearly, there is an emphasis on issues related to female veterans and the numerous issues they face. Education, employment, homelessness, military sexual trauma (MST) and domestic violence are possibly interwoven. Health disparities in Los Angeles County as they impact women and girls is another over-arching theme that could help focus and energize our activities. We have looked at Beach City Blue Zones Project, have received the Women's Health Report, but what action do we need to take to follow up?

There are several ways we can respond. First, we could pull together an electronic “tool kit” on these issues and post them on our website. Next, we could pick two community events, in addition to the annual luncheon, where all Commissioners attend and gain media coverage. Luncheon keynote speakers should intentionally focus on the themes identified, and our sister Commissioners should intentionally be invited to share and support our efforts. They may also be a source of potential honorees. A couple of funding opportunities were presented to our Commission last year, and I suggest we follow through on those. We have great ideas and energy, so let’s harness them around a mutual and cohesive agenda.

With all of our excellent new board members joining us, this shall be a year of action. A majority of Commissions are examining purpose and impact as a shared vision. Our national organization (NACW) provides some of that and if we match those efforts we will gain traction and visibility in our communities for our work with women and girls. Finally, our Supervisors need to know what we are doing and how we are making our County better through those efforts. We can strengthen that communication this year by having timely and powerful events to share, with data to both inform, and, back them up.

‘ We are going to have a great year!

Respectfully submitted by Veda E. Ward